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We've had the Redfern Park Speech and The Apology: What's next?

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Introduction

What really changed for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between Paul Keating's Redfern Park Speech (Keating 1992) and Kevin Rudd's Apology to the stolen generations (Rudd 2008)? What will change between the Apology and the next speech of an Australian Prime Minister? The two speeches were intricately linked, and they were both personal and political. But do they really signify change at the political level?

This paper reflects my attempt to turn the gaze away from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and back to where the speeches originated: the Australian Labor Party (ALP). I question whether the changes foreshadowed in the two speeches – including changes by the Australian public and within Australian society – are evident in the internal mechanisms of the ALP. I also seek to understand why non-Indigenous women seem to have given in to the existing ways of the ALP instead of challenging the status quo which keeps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples marginalised. I believe that, without a thorough examination and a change in the ALP's practices, the domination and subjugation of Indigenous peoples will continue – within the Party, through the Australian political process and, therefore, through governments.

The Redfern Park Speech and The Apology

Eighteen years ago, the then Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating gave a speech on reconciliation and raised numerous issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – including the major issue of the removal of children and people from land (Keating 1992). The speech was delivered on 10 December 1992 in Redfern Park, Sydney, New South Wales, and it has come to be known as the Redfern Park Speech. Keating was the first Australian Prime Minister to publically acknowledge to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the impacts of colonisation by non-Indigenous Australians and to acknowledge that non-Indigenous Australians were/are responsible for the problems and difficulties that Indigenous Australians were/are facing.

Keating's speech was so impressive and moving that it was ranked third in an Australian Broadcasting Commission Radio National survey on unforgettable speeches made in the public arena in Australia or overseas (ABC 2007).

Keating referred to the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the creation of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation as ways ahead for Australia and Australians to "commit ourselves to achieving concrete results" in terms of justice and equity (Keating 1992: 2). Keating also referred to Australia as a social democracy that "reflects a fundamental belief in justice" and "the land of the fair go and the better chance". He promoted a future "in which Australians could say with pride that they had passed the great test of conciliation with the first Australians; that we were all equal, balanced, as we should be" (Yunupingu 2010: 5).

Keating's speech was monumental and it formed a platform for later work, including the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (HREOC 1997), and the National Library of Australia's Oral History Project (NLA 2006). The issues of the stolen generations were presented in newspaper, magazine and journal articles and also on television and radio programs (Manne 2001). Books were written and the stories of people who were separated from their families were told (Bird 1998; Haebich 2000; Mellor and Haebich 2002). It was a time of change and dreams of an apology. In her book, Bird (1998: 117) states that she was "visited by the idea that by the time this book was finished, the Prime Minister might have apologised to Indigenous people on behalf of the rest of the nation". Bird was not alone in her dreams for an apology. It was discussed for years by many groups and individuals.

Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to the Stolen Generations was delivered on 13 February 2008 (Rudd 2008). On the day that the Apology came, I breathed relief and may have said "finally". Finally because: there was a formal apology to the stolen generations, their families and communities on behalf of the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Parliament; Recommendation 5a of the *Bringing them Home* report was recognised and realised; the impact of the laws, policies and practices that had created the stolen generations were recognised; and, for some people, what happened to them was validated and they could move on and really focus on their healing. The Apology also touched the hearts and minds of many non-Aboriginal people who could not imagine losing a child or children in such a way. The empathy expressed by some non-Indigenous people in the days and weeks that followed was displayed in newspapers, at public events and in communities throughout Australia.

But looking back now, I ask what did all this result in? What has changed in terms of the position of Aboriginal peoples? What is different and what should be different? For me as an Aboriginal woman, the Apology was both personal and political. Here, I share some of the feelings and thoughts I had on the day.

My personal thoughts about the Apology

"I'm just a little black bastard", my grandfather would sometimes say when he referred to himself. As a young girl, I never quite understood what he meant and why he referred to himself as he did. To share with us what he knew, we, his grandchildren, would sit with him in his lounge room while my grandmother, mother and sometimes my aunties sat in the kitchen drinking tea. My grandfather told us stories about himself, about growing up and about the world. He shared some of his ways of seeing and the words just seemed to roll off his tongue. As we, his grandchildren, sat in the lounge room with him to talk and listen, so did many other people who came to have a yarn (share, talk, discuss). Some called him "Teddy", "Ted", or "Camel", others called him "Smithy", and others would fondly say "how are ya, ya old bastard". Me, I called him "grandpa".

As I grew and matured, I came to know my grandpa as a man who possessed great insight, generosity and knowledge. I also came to recognise his adoption as a child and the immense loss and confusion he felt. He had lost his knowing of who he was and his place in the world. His confusion came from the multiple truths and the multiple explanations of who he was and was supposed to be. Since that time, I have come to understand and know some of what my grandpa felt and some of what he experienced. His life instilled within me a need to explore my own belonging, Aboriginality and placement in the world. This is an on-going journey. I have moved along my own life's journey and developed an awareness of my grandpa that I never knew when he was alive. I have also come to understand that many Aboriginal people were in the same position as him, and had similar experiences and feelings. The generations that have followed those who were given up, adopted, taken, kidnapped and stolen have also felt and experienced the longing in varying degrees (Bird 1998; Haebich 2000; Mellor and Haebich 2002).

On the day of the Apology, I felt hope. I felt joy. I felt tears of sadness for my grandfather who never knew the woman who birthed him. She had to 'give him up' and he never came to learn about her life. Through my mother's commitment to her father, my grandfather, my family has come to find my great grandmother's gravesite in my lifetime and to know more about her short life, her murder and her struggles. She now has a marker where she is buried, so that others know that she lived and that her life mattered. The marker not only stands as a public testament that she was born and lived a life that mattered, but that she did have a family that still lives, breathes and walks on Country, and that her blood and that of her/our ancestors flows through us as it did her. She/they/I/we are historically and ancestrally linked to the Rosewood/Calvert area in the Ipswich region and, therefore, also to the Brisbane Valley of South-East Queensland. No one can take this away from me or my family. This journey continues for me and my family as it does for many Aboriginal families who were affected by policies of the past and by the trauma of separation, longing and belonging. In listening to Rudd's Apology, I felt a sense of relief for all who had been affected by past government policies in relation to Aboriginal children and families.

My political reaction to the Apology

The Apology is both personal and political to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, just as the people who talk about it also make it personal and political through their opinions, actions and inactions. Although the Apology was offered, it stands alone – without compensation which was included as Recommendation 15 of the *Bringing them Home* report (Gunstone 2008; Hollinsworth 2008).

Hollinsworth (2008: 17) has called on the Commonwealth Government to implement all the recommendations of the *Bringing them Home* report, including “genuine reparations and healing for all those damaged by past policies and practices”. Behrendt (2008: 22), speaking to the issue in the same collection of papers, states that the Apology “should be followed by more concrete and practical steps forward to deal with the entrenched disadvantage within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities”. I support both of these positions. I believe that former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd should have gone beyond offering the Apology and the actions to date. He needed to think about what his Government and his fellow ALP comrades were doing and what things they need to do differently. Current Prime Minister Julia Gillard now needs to address this question.

In an article in *The Australian* (2010), USA President Barack Obama is quoted using the words of Mahatma Gandhi when he spoke to African leaders in Washington. Obama said, “One of the things that everybody here needs to internalise, is that ‘you have to be the change that you seek’” (*The Australian* 2010: 12). From this perspective, all politicians need to approach policy, practices and programs differently from in the past and they all need to rethink both the personal and the political. Only through people, including politicians, enacting their responsibilities and making changes, can the Apology move beyond the symbolic. The changes need to be both personal and political – in people’s daily lives, and in the institutions and organisations to which they belong. To highlight this need for change, I reflect on the practices of the ALP – the political party behind both the Redfern Park Speech and the Apology.

All talk and no action

In reflecting on the ALP, I need to disclose that I was a member of the ALP from 1997 until 2008. I was a registered member of a Branch and served terms as a member of the Queensland Labor Health Policy Committee and the Queensland ALP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Committee. I sold raffle tickets, handed out how to vote flyers and served as a scrutineer in several State, Federal and local government elections.

The ALP’s record of nominating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for pre-selection and influential union positions is extremely poor (Australian Electoral Commission 2007; Foley 2007; Karvelas 2010; Pearson 2010). So is its record of negotiating, consulting with and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Over the years, I have heard a lot of talk in forums, workshops and meetings about how they, the ALP, want to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

election candidates. But it has still not happened in any significant numbers. For years, I heard non-Indigenous ALP members say “we don’t have anyone”. Yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would show interest and come and go within the Party. The sentiments expressed by non-Indigenous people that “we don’t have anyone” reeks of non-Indigenous people thinking that they know which Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people would be most suitable – that is, what kind of ‘indigene’ (Smith 1999) they want and who might be most appropriate for the ALP. The extent of the problem is amplified by the words of former ALP President Warren Mundine (quoted in Karvelas 2010: 8) when he states “it’s 109 years and we haven’t been able to get an Indigenous person into the House of Representatives”. In an article about Indigenous election candidates in Australia, Pearson (2010: 18) makes a comment about Warren Mundine: he “is still waiting for a place on the Senate ticket or pre-selection for a reasonably safe seat It’s scandalous that someone with his temperament and courage is still out on the woodheap”. Mundine is an Aboriginal man from New South Wales. For me, this highlights the ways in which the ongoing processes of colonialism against Aboriginal people still continues to operate.

There are a number of reasons why we don’t have Indigenous ALP candidates and Indigenous ALP members of the House of Representatives. Mostly, the reasons rest with the actions and inactions of ALP members, unions and their supporters. Pearson (2010: 18) argues that “the ALP has become a party of insiders with a shameless predilection for dynastic rule rivaling the English aristocracy”. Within this regime, it is not just men who are responsible for the maintenance of the system; women, too, have now claimed it for themselves.

Some recent examples demonstrate the manipulation of pre-selections where an opportunity was lost for a possible Aboriginal candidate. I have chosen examples that have women at the centre, to demonstrate that they, too, benefit from the system that operates.

The first example is that of Peter Beattie’s former electorate of Brisbane Central; it shows how a union official becomes a member of State Parliament. After former Premier Peter Beattie announced his resignation, there were photographs in the free local newspaper of union official Grace Grace with the new Premier Anna Bligh, showing readers that Grace Grace had the support of the Premier prior to the ALP plebiscite (voting process) even being closed. That is, the photograph appeared before the ALP members in that electorate had voted for their preferred candidate. My interpretation of the photograph is that the Premier was making a statement about whom she preferred and wanted. Being a union official or a lawyer clearly helps one to become a candidate in the ALP (Prime Minister Julia Gillard was a lawyer, as were numerous other ALP Members of the House of Representatives).

The second example is one that centres on mates. Sometimes, you don’t even have to be a member of the ALP; you can still become a candidate for a possible winnable seat if you have a ‘mate’ who can talk you up in the right circles. Cheryl Kernot moved from the Australian Democrats to the ALP, and

straight into the role of candidate for the Federal Electorate of Dickson (she didn't even live in the Electorate). Salusinszky (2010: 7) notes that in her 2002 memoir, Kernot details the "poor treatment she had received at the hands of Labor 'mates'". I notice that she does not mention the ALP men and women she 'did over' to get the seat. I also wonder why she wasn't asked to demonstrate her discipline and loyalty to the Party before standing, and why the ALP Party machine did not rule her out because she didn't have a period of continuous membership to qualify. Her Labor 'mates', including Gareth Evans the then Foreign Minister with whom she had an extra-marital affair, all obviously helped her get the seat (Salusinszky 2010) and a position on the frontbench (within Cabinet). They turned a blind eye to the rules and stuck up for her within the system of 'mates'. In her memoir, she then has the cheek to have a go at them for the "poor treatment" she received at the hands of Labor mates. I have to ask why she expected any different. In 2010, after being the Leader of the Australian Democrats and an ALP frontbencher, she ran for a Senate seat; she was not elected.

The third example is the Seat of Melbourne, which takes in the suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood, Parkville, Richmond, Brunswick and the Melbourne city area. Here, there was an opportunity to better reflect the electorate or go for a change in terms of the electorate's history, but the ALP opted not to do so. The Electorate includes inner-city-dwelling professional voters and large numbers of public housing residents, asylum seekers, refugees, new migrants, students and Aboriginal people. There are several large community-based organisations within the area, including a number of large community-controlled Aboriginal organisations and businesses. When the sitting member, previous Finance Minister Lindsey Tanner, resigned, there was ample opportunity for the ALP to recruit a dynamic Aboriginal leader for the Seat. The Electorate has a long and strong history of Aboriginal activism. Instead, the ALP chose Cath Bowtell, who has worked as a negotiator with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and who also drove union policy on women and work. Several sources note that she left the ACTU after losing her bid to replace Sharon Burrow as ACTU President (Best and Duncan 2010; Rintoul 2010). Rintoul states that Bowtell was Sharon Burrow's preferred successor but "left the peak union body after losing out to nurses union chief Ged Kearney" (Rintoul 2010: 1). Bowtell won pre-selection unopposed (Rout 2010). In early statements about her candidacy, I could find no mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within her proposed electorate. During the campaign, she stuck to health, education, climate change, emissions and border protection. She faced strong opposition from Adam Bandt who ran for The Greens and was elected (Rout 2010; Shaw 2010).

Bandt, a former industrial lawyer, campaigned on roughly the same issues as Bowtell, along with a strong local campaign supporting same sex marriage (Price and Gleeson 2010; Shaw 2010). Given the Aboriginal presence within the Electorate, I was interested in whether local Aboriginal issues were part of his campaign. I went to Bandt's campaign office in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, on two occasions while in Melbourne during July, and asked to speak to him. He wasn't there, and I was given his campaign materials by a volunteer. The materials made no mention of local Aboriginal issues, aside from the issues

within the national platform position statements of The Greens. Aboriginal issues weren't really on the agenda within the Seat, even though it has a strong Aboriginal presence. Former Finance Minister Lindsey Tanner had indicated to Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd several months before he tendered his resignation that he would be resigning. Lindsey Tanner had held the Seat for several terms and the Seat of Melbourne has been held by the ALP for almost 100 years. There was ample opportunity and time to recruit a dynamic Aboriginal man or woman to run for election in the seat of Melbourne. I believe this was a lost opportunity and demonstrates lack of commitment by the ALP.

Former ALP president Warren Mundine has said that the "Labor Party's commitment to Indigenous representation was 'tragic'" (quoted in Karvelas 2010: 8). According to Mundine (quoted in Karvelas 2010), the ALP did not run one Aboriginal person in a winnable seat in the 2010 election. Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin's response was that there was one Aboriginal man standing for election in the seat of Grey in South Australia (Karvelas 2010). The seat was not a winnable seat for the ALP and the candidate was not elected. In fact, there was a swing to the Liberals in Grey. Pearson contributes to this discussion in his recent article: "when you consider the kind of parliamentary talent routinely elected across the country and the perfectly adequate Indigenous alternatives it is just appalling" (Pearson 2010: 18). Moreover, Pearson (2010: 18) explains that "North Queensland has been a hothouse, producing prominent and courageous Indigenous leaders steeped in the labour movement ... and yet none of them has ever been groomed by the ALP to stand as candidates in Queensland to which Indigenous people have long been faithful".

In contrast, The Liberals, who have often been portrayed as the enemy to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pre-selected Ken Wyatt for the Perth Seat of Hasluck. Wyatt is an Aboriginal man from a strong Noongar, Yamatji and Wongoi heritage. He was elected at the 2010 election, and became the first Aboriginal person in Australia to be elected into the House of Representatives. To date, only two other Aboriginal people have ever been elected to the Australian Parliament: Neville Bonner (The Liberal Party) and Aden Ridgeway (Australian Democrats) were both elected to serve in the Senate. In the 2010 election campaign, Wyatt's Aboriginality did not go unnoticed or uncommented on. In claiming victory, he addressed the racist hate email he had received since the election (Collerton 2010). What is significant is that the three Indigenous people who have been elected to the Australian Parliament have all been Aboriginal men. For me, it begs the question: when will we see Indigenous women elected to the Parliament? Moreover, will we see non-Indigenous men and women attempting to support an Indigenous woman or women in standing for a safe or relatively safe seat like they do for non-Indigenous women candidates?

Non-Indigenous women are increasingly gaining pre-selection within the ALP. They have access to support mechanisms, such as women's conferences and Emily's List (a support program for women running for political office), and they use the old system of mates, union positions and factional deals used by

men. The ousting of Kevin Rudd from the Prime Minister's role in July 2010 by Julia Gillard and the 'faceless men' behind the scenes was demonstration of this (Fitzgerald 2010; Hewett 2010), as was the pre-selection of Cath Bowtell, Grace Grace, Cheryl Kernot and surely numerous others over the years. Non-Indigenous women are part of the process of structurally marginalising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, all the while arguing that they stand for 'democracy'. In this way, non-Indigenous women are active participants in the marginalisation and denial of the human, civil, political, legal, sexual and Indigenous rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Their attitudes, like male attitudes, are forged within a set of race, class, sex, colonialist and neo-colonialist practices and within the ALP practices that minimise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation. Non-Indigenous women benefit and profit from the past and continued marginalisation and oppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. What if Cath Bowtell had said, "I think we should canvass the possibility of an Aboriginal candidate for Melbourne"? What if Grace Grace had said "I think we should run an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander candidate in the electorate of Brisbane Central"? There were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women who could have run in both of these seats and who probably feel as though they could have given it a go.

What's wrong with having 'mates'?

There are many examples and situations where jobs for union delegates and organisers, 'mates' and 'factional friends' operate. There are also positions in electoral offices, union offices and positions within the representational structure that are negotiated and offered to certain people ahead of others. We all know of examples where someone has seemingly been gifted 'the job' or a 'job' in organisations, institutions and in government departments. The ALP is no different. However, the number of non-Indigenous women who have been given 'jobs' in the ALP stands in stark contrast to the number of Indigenous women who have been given 'jobs'. This is despite the ALP historically casting "itself as the natural political friend of the Indigenous rights movement" (Foley 2007: 139) and of Indigenous peoples in general. The number of non-Indigenous women who have 'mates' in the ALP in the right circles also stands in contrast with the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have 'mates' in the right circles. For example, in the recent election, no one in the ALP stood up for a possible Aboriginal candidate who might have wanted to nominate for pre-selection in the seat of Melbourne, which is in direct contrast to the situation that Cath Bowtell found herself in. Based on her previous work within the union movement and her association with the right people, Bowtell would have had numerous 'mates' supporting her nomination. Aboriginal people do not have the same kind of 'mates' through our social, political, economic and education circles. Walter's work exploring segregated Indigenous workforces (2007) and socio-economic status (2009) demonstrates why we don't have the same 'mates' along racial lines.

Non-Indigenous women are gaining equity with men within the ALP along the same stratified lines already found within society. This is why there are now non-Indigenous female lawyers, economists, business degree graduates and

union delegates and organisers gaining pre-selection within the ALP, and not just non-Indigenous male lawyers, economists, business degree graduates and union delegates and organisers. In this way, men and women, predominately from Anglo-Australian middle-class backgrounds, maintain and protect their interests in the ALP. Moreover, they continue to further invest in their white possession (Moreton-Robinson 2005) of the Australian system of governance and therefore ensure that we as Indigenous peoples are excluded. Don't get me wrong – there are Indigenous people who are ALP members and workers for the ALP in that they sell raffle tickets, give out how to vote leaflets, work as scrutineers and sit on committees. All of this, however, is done in a volunteer capacity. Translating this form of support and inclusion to being an elected representative in government is another matter. The kind of power that subjugates Indigenous peoples within the ALP is maintained, protected and reserved. The ALP reproduces racialised and institutional power and privilege that holds Indigenous Australians in the position of object. That is, we are forever objectified and reproduced as subjects within the context of what the government needs to do for us, has to do for us or can do for us. They are then seen as being honourable for what they do 'for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' and for the work they do to 'improve the situation'.

Women in the ALP are part of this process. They do not sit on the side-lines, but actively engage and reproduce and produce power in similar ways. They, too, insulate themselves and act against our sovereignty, just as the men in the ALP do. Moreton-Robinson's (2004) theoretical understandings are important to draw upon at this point. She explains that the protection and investment in white values and interests is rooted in the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty (2004). As a result of their possessive investments in patriarchal white sovereignty, non-Indigenous women within the ALP can act against Indigenous sovereignty claims about our being, our knowledge, our culture and our land. They can show no concern for our rights or empowerment in the same way that men in the ALP do. They can act in ways that insulate themselves and their institutions in order to protect their privileges (Smith 1999) and can instate gatekeepers to guard their entitlements, thereby creating a comfort zone and marginalising dissenting Indigenous voices (Rigney 1997).

My dear friend and 'mate' Joan Brady, an ALP stalwart from Rockhampton, reminded me in my early ALP membership days to always follow the rules. She'd say, "If you don't follow the rules you'll be in trouble". The problem was that I didn't see too many non-Indigenous people following the rules and I didn't think the rules were all that fair. During my time as an ALP member, I saw other ALP members – non-Indigenous men and women – proclaim equity when it suited them and then deny or ignore issues and incidents of wrong doing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not generally included in important decision-making and when we were we never really had much power. I realised very quickly that ALP Party officials and members and elected members of Parliament could be in a whole series of relationships with me and other Aboriginal people "without ever losing the relative upper hand" (Hart 2003: 15). Joan passed away in 1999 and, if she was still alive

today, I'd be able to talk with her about all the matters I've raised in this paper. She was always open to such talk. I have attempted to talk to others over time, and have been told not to talk to this person or that person about it, not to send emails out as they can become permanent records, and more. I was once told that I "wouldn't want to be seen as being problematic", because then I'd get nowhere. I had to laugh because, based on the history of the ALP, the number of Indigenous candidates and the number of Indigenous people in high-level party positions, I was never going to get anywhere anyway. I did have a brief dream of standing for Parliament, but based on the reality of what happens I knew it would never come to fruition.

The way I see it at this present time, there is a gulf between the theory and practice of the ALP and the personal actions of numerous men and women within the ALP in regards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. That is, there is most definitely a difference between what the ALP promises and what it does. There is also a gap in terms of what it expects employers to do in terms of equity, equality, diversity, merit, equal employment opportunity, fairness and a person's ability to do the job, and the ALP's own practices. The power and privilege that are afforded to non-Indigenous people within the ALP are not afforded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In fact, the ALP's relationship with Australia's Indigenous peoples remains, in most circumstances, one of exclusion and assimilation – where our epistemological and ontological positions are not just buried by ALP policy and procedure but also steamrolled over with pathological presumptions. In this way, the ALP acts discursively to frame and constrain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and maintains dominance, power and control of and over Indigenous peoples (Cronin 2007; Larkin 2009; Moreton-Robinson 2007; Walter 2009). The ALP works to maintain its interests rather than the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Whom the ALP taps on the shoulder, gifts and rewards with safe seats, and whom it generally chooses to represent itself is evidence of this.

Conclusion

In reflecting on the Apology, I ask the question: will there again be a gulf between the words spoken and the actions and behaviours? Kevin Rudd, as former Prime Minister and leader of the ALP, apologised for what others have done in the past and for the pain and hurt experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. His passionate, performative Apology gained him virtue and kudos in the process, and perhaps even offered some white Australians a form of redemption. It is this talk which, in years to come, will be referred to as the "good intentions" (Behrendt 2008). Paul Keating's Redfern Park Speech is regarded as one of Australia's most unforgettable speeches and also marks a point of "good intentions". He was also the leader of the ALP at the time. It is actions such as this that give the ALP the label of a political friend to Indigenous peoples and the Indigenous rights movement (Foley 2007). I ask, how many more speeches do we need?

As the leader of the ALP, Prime Minister Julia Gillard needs to turn her focus on what her own Party is doing. There is a focus within the ALP on the past and the future, but not on what people within the ALP are doing now. Gillard's

campaign cry was 'Moving Forward'. To move forward, changes need to happen within the fabric that makes the ALP the ALP. Otherwise it will reek of "do as I say, not do as I do". It will not be able to 'Move Forward', and the "shameless predilection for dynastic rule" (Pearson 2010: 18) will continue. Gary Foley's work on ALP policy and their interventions and actions demonstrates "the duplicity and hypocrisy of successive Labor administrations (state and federal) in their dealings with Indigenous Australians" (Foley 2007: 139). The ALP's inaction in seeking and grooming Aboriginal candidates for election is evidence of this hypocrisy.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu (2010: 5), in discussing Keating's speech and Rudd's Apology, explains how "Aboriginal leaders have been lifted up time and time again, only to find that what we had hoped for was not what we got when it came to real action". Numerous promises came from the speeches, but what has really been achieved? Marcia Langton is quoted (in Karvelas and Hall 2010: 8) as saying that Aboriginal people are asking of the Apology: "Is that it? Isn't there anything else?".

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women are getting on with their work and taking up their responsibilities. We are focusing on our issues of Stolen Generations, Stolen Wages, cultural affirmation, sovereignty, and Native Title. We are advocating for improvements in health, housing, education, employment and life's circumstances. We have our responsibilities as Indigenous people. We cannot carry the responsibilities of other Australians along with our own. I encourage all people to take up their responsibilities in relation to Indigenous peoples and the Apology. The ALP needs to take up their responsibilities and enact 'the change they seek' within their own organisation, along with the society in which they seek to represent and govern.

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Biography

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